

Senate Armed Services Committee McNamara Briefing 24 Jan 67
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(DEFENSE BRIEFING)

WASHINGTON--DEFENSE SECRETARY MCNAMARA DISCOUNTED FEARS OF AN ANTI-MISSILE GAP TODAY AND SAID THE U.S. HAS "COMPLETE CONFIDENCE" THAT IT CAN PENETRATE RUSSIA'S NEW MISSILE DEFENSES.

MCNAMARA MADE THE STATEMENT TO NEWSMEN AFTER MEETING BEHIND CLOSED DOORS FOR THE SECOND SUCCESSIVE DAY WITH THE SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE AND THE MILITARY APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE. HE COMMENTED ON THE ANTI-MISSILE PROVISIONS OF THE NEW DEFENSE BUDGET.

MCNAMARA STRESSED THAT THE BUDGET INCLUDES ABOUT HALF A BILLION DOLLARS FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE NIKE X, ANTI-BALLISTIC MISSILE SYSTEM TO ASSURE THAT WE HAVE "THE BEST POSSIBLE SYSTEM." THE BUDGET, HE SAID, ALSO STATES THAT THE U.S. WILL NOT PRODUCE SUCH A SYSTEM UNTIL IT DISCUSSES WITH THE RUSSIANS STEPS TO "DAMPEN DOWN WHAT WE BELIEVE TO BE A COSTLY AND WASTEFUL ARMS RACE."

CONGRESS IS BEING ASKED TO APPROPRIATE AN ADDITIONAL \$375 MILLION, THE SECRETARY SAID, FOR USE "IN THE EVENT THAT THE DISCUSSIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION ARE UNSUCCESSFUL." IN THAT EVENT, HE SAID, IT MIGHT BE DESIRABLE TO "PROTECT OUR OFFENSIVE WEAPONS."

HE MADE NO FLAT PREDICTION THAT THE U.S. WOULD CONSTRUCT SUCH A DEFENSIVE SYSTEM IF TALKS FAIL. HE STRESSED, HOWEVER, THAT THE U.S. HAS COMPLETE CONFIDENCE IN ITS MISSILES BECAUSE IT IS "POSSIBLE FOR THE OFFENSE TO SATURATE THE DEFENSE" IN MISSILE WARFARE.

1/24--GE131P